



Report title: Bus Review – Task and Finish Group Update

To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Meeting Date: 22 February 2021

Public report: Public Report

From: Cllr Anne Hay
Chair of the Bus Review Task and Finish Group

Recommendations: The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

a) Note the update from the Bus Review Task and Finish Group

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update from the Task and Finish group on the work currently being undertaken in regard to the Bus review.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Working Group was set up by the Overview & Scrutiny committee early last year to understand and assist the Combined Authority in developing a Public Transport strategy to serve the needs of the residents of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 2.2 At the time the Working Group was formed it had been hoped that the Combined Authority would have been in a position to present a report to Overview & Scrutiny in January 2021. However due to the ongoing Covid restrictions which started with the lockdown in March of last year, which has resulted in greatly reduced usage of bus services throughout the Authority area, work on defining, developing and assessing the Public Transport Strategy has been slower than had been hoped.
- 2.3 The Working Group have asked the Officer of CPCA Oliver Howarth if once restrictions are lifted and there is clear progress on moving the Transport Strategy forward we could meet to be updated.
- 2.4 The Bus Task and Finish Group will provide a report within the Committee's Annual Report, at the first meeting of the Committee following the May 2021 election. The newly appointed committee will be invited to consider whether to continue the work of the Bus Task and

Finish Group, while awaiting further information from the Combined Authority Bus Task Force, or whether to close the group and look to restart it at an appropriate time.

WHERE WE ARE NOW – WHERE WE ARE GOING

- 1) Usage of bus services has declined to approximately 20% of pre-Covid levels and until such time as restrictions are lifted are not likely to improve. Even then numbers using the service may be slow to return and it is expected that usage will only reach 80% of pre-Covid figures.
- 2) The Combined Authority is looking at either a franchise or an Enhanced Partnership, or a mixture of the two. Franchising is the preferred option but due to the current low usage numbers it is not possible to produce a business case which would back up the case for successful franchising. Stagecoach who were originally against franchising now seem to have come round to the idea.
- 3) Since the Summer work has started on five new bus schemes across the Authority area:
 - X3 Huntingdon-Papworth-Cambourne-Addenbrookes (launched 31st Aug 2020)
 - 905 Bedford-St Ives-Cambourne-Science Park-Cambridge City (launched 31st Aug 2020)
 - 29 Peterborough Hospital-Orton-Hampton (to commence approximately 1st March 2021)
 - V2 March-Chatteris-Warboys-St Ives (ongoing connection to Addenbrookes) (to commence 1st March 2021)
 - West Huntingdonshire DRT scheme – to commence once lockdown is ended and once public messaging no longer discourages use of public transport
- 4) CPCA is committed to looking at revising the strategic bus network such as joining up foreshortened bus routes to create more through journeys. Further work is needed on the East Cambridgeshire bus network, how it joins where people live to where they work and shop. This will require considerable consultation before it can go ahead.
- 5) From 1st April the Combined Authority will be consolidating the entire transport team moving to CPCA (approximately 8 - 9 people from Cambridgeshire County Council and a smaller number of people from Peterborough)
- 6) In late March the Combined Authority will be looking at launching a new website bringing together timetable information and a journey planner, together with information on accessible travel.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 None

4. Legal Implications

4.1 None

5. Background Papers

5.1 [Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report](#)